

From: "rkdavies@gw.dec.state.ny.us%inter2" <rkdavies@gw.dec.state.ny.us>
Subject: Farm Bill 2007 Official Comments - 12/29/2005 09:08 AM CST
Date Sent: 12/29/2005 09:08:12 CST
Date Received: 12/29/2005 09:09:14 CST

Email: rkdavies@gw.dec.state.ny.us

FirstName: Robert

LastName: Davies

Address1: NYS Department of Environmental Conservatuion, Office of the
State Forester

Address2: 625 Broadway

City: Albany

State: New York

zipcode: 12233

Question1:

Question2:

Question3:

Question4: For more than a half century, the States and the United States Forest Service have worked in partnership with private forest land owners to encourage the sustainable management of the nation?s forestry resources. That partnership has worked well and should be continued and strengthened in the new Farm Bill. Nearly 35% of the nation?s rural lands are forested, held by families and other private owners, representing a significant potential to contribute critical amenities and benefits essential to human life and a high standard of living: clean water and air; forest products; fish and wildlife habitat; scenic beauty; recreational opportunities, carbon sequestration, open space and mitigation of global climate change.

Too often, the economic pressures on individual owners and a lack of technical knowledge lead to actions in which the nation?s forest resources (with an inherent public benefits), are lost to fragmentation and development, their potential compromised by non sustainable use and exploitation. It is imperative that society take action to invest in the nation?s future, supporting non-federal forest owners with education, financial help and technical assistance. A century ago, Teddy Roosevelt and Gifford Pinchot inspired this country to invest in conservation, with sound forestry leading the way. In the 21st century, the challenges facing the country, and entire planet, have changed, but the need to invest in sustainable forestry continues and remains a critical tool that will address such modern environmental challenges as global climate change, sprawl and energy independence.

Forestry Title within 2007 Farm Bill

A Forestry Title within the 2007 Farm Bill is required to promote the sustainable use and management of the nation?s private forest lands. The US Forest Service must serve as the lead authority within USDA to administer national forestry programs on behalf of the Secretary of Agriculture, in cooperation with State Foresters, state forestry agencies and Tribes. The US Forest Service, in partnership with State Foresters, can also deliver technical forestry assistance associated with Conservation Title programs.

Forest Ecosystem Services Security Program

Private forest lands provide the bulk of ecosystem services to society including clean air and water, timber and agro-forestry products, fish and wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, aesthetics and open space amenities. These societal benefits are provided with landowners having to bear the burden and cost of landownership. America needs to invest now in measures to secure its ecosystems from threats of loss, degradation and over exploitation to facilitate the flow of societal benefit well into the future.

A Forest Ecosystem Services Security Program, administered by the US

Forest Service on behalf of the Secretary of Agriculture in cooperation with State Foresters, providing appropriate compensation to individual owners managing their forest lands to a consistently high Stewardship level is essential to secure a continuing flow of these public services for the benefit of all citizens. Those individual owners willing to expend the time and financial resources require the timely investment and support of society to continue their important work.

Forest Stewardship Program

The Forest Stewardship Program (FSP) has served as a substantial catalyst promoting the practice of sustainable forestry on private forest lands. The Forest Stewardship Program, initially authorized in the 1990 Farm Bill, remains paramount in this effort warranting significant funding to facilitate continuation of federal forest policy and program that will soon span more than two decades. Working cooperatively with State Foresters and Extension Directors, the Secretary of Agriculture through the US Forest Service, must be in a position to inform and educate owners about forest management as well as providing technical forestry assistance to facilitate their continued sustainable forest use and management. Such action helps promote the well being of the nation's economy and environment.

Forest Land Enhancement Program

The Forest Land Enhancement Program (FLEP), established in the 2002 Farm Bill, has served as a significant incentive facilitating installation of sustainable forestry practices on non-industrial private forest land. Efforts through FLEP to date have not kept pace with need and opportunity exhibited by family forest owners. Program continuation, if not expansion, is required to assist owners to undertake actions that generate significant societal benefits including clean air and water, timber and agro-forestry products, fish and wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, aesthetics and open space amenities. Substantial and consistent funding is required as an early and cost effective investment in the continued delivery of these basic benefits essential to life and the well being of society from enhanced forest sustainability.

Forest Legacy Program

The Forest Legacy Program (FLP), administered by the US Forest Service in partnership with the States, is a voluntary land conservation program that provides financial assistance to the states to prevent forest fragmentation and enhance conservation of forest lands. The FLP has ensured that important forests remain intact and continue to contribute to the community, local economy, the landowners and the environment. FLP re-authorization is necessary as pressure to develop forest lands continues to increase.

Urban & Community Forestry

The Urban and Community Forestry program (U & CF) was authorized by the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978 (PL 95-313) and revised by the 1990 Farm Bill (PL 101-624) to promote natural resource management in populated areas and improve quality of life. U & CF goals of awareness, outreach and environmental equity, partnerships, and comprehensive natural resource management focus on achieving healthy sustainable forests, sustainable economic development, and information resource management.

The Urban and Community Forestry Program of the United States Forest Service promotes natural resource management in populated areas to improve quality of life.

The vast majority of US citizens live in highly populated urban cities or less populated towns and villages. These environments have been modified to a large or small extent to accommodate human habitation. Often natural resources have been degraded or ignored as communities

developed and expanded. Yet, the preservation and/or restoration of community natural resources have been identified as having significant value to quality of life for urban residents. The U&CF goals of awareness, outreach and environmental equity, partnerships, and comprehensive natural resource management focus on achieving healthy sustainable forests, sustainable economic development, and information resource management.

The Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Program is implemented by state forestry agencies through matching grants to the states. The state programs deliver technical, training and financial assistance to their communities in the management of community forests. Federal support, both technical and financial, has been instrumental in successfully launching state Urban and Community Forestry programs. Communities throughout the nation, in highly urban areas as well as smaller populated towns have engaged in management of their trees as a result of this federal/state program. While successful, more needs to be done. Not all communities have embraced urban forest management yet. Those that have started need further technical and financial assistance to accomplish their goals. Continued authorization of the Urban and Community Forestry Program in the Farm Bill is an important tool for increasing quality of life for urban residents in populated areas.

The New York State Urban and Community Forestry Council, a non-profit organization, dedicated to promoting sound urban forest management, conducted a survey of NY communities in 2004. Two hundred thirty nine (239) or 25.6% of the state's municipalities responded to the survey. Of the 239 respondents, 172 municipalities desired additional funding in the amount of \$13,448,300. Planting new trees was considered the most under-funded element of their tree management programs (114 respondents). American Forests in its City Green program calculates the value of urban trees in air pollution removal, carbon storage and sequestration, storm water runoff, and water quality improvement. Increases in urban forest canopy can increase environmental quality value to NY communities. Most NY municipalities are not at their maximum or optimal tree canopy coverage and are not benefitting, to the extent they could, from the environmental values an increased tree canopy would provide.

The NYS Energy Research and Development Authority, in cooperation with the Department of Environmental Conservation U&CF program and Forest Service funded a study on mitigation of the "heat island effect" in New York City. Increasing tree canopy by 30% for the city was found to lower peak temperatures during heat waves by 1-2 degrees F. An earlier study by DEC, Air Quality Planning Bureau and the FS, Northeast Research Center investigated the effects of increased tree canopy in NYC on Ozone concentrations during high peak periods. They found that a 30% increase in tree canopy cover resulted in measurable ozone reductions. Throughout the country studies have supported the assertion that increased municipal tree canopy increases environmental benefits to the community. Continued Farm Bill authorization of the Urban and Community Forestry Program is essential for supporting community initiatives in managing their urban forests.

A major community assistance initiative for tree planting designed to appreciably increase tree canopy coverage in cities and towns would have significant environmental, social and economic benefits to urban dwellers and the whole nation. Livable communities with improved quality of life for their residents retain them and protect rural forest and agricultural lands from development through reducing urban sprawl and out migration.

Question5: National Wood Products Utilization Strategy

The USFS Economic Action Program (EAP) has in the past supported states?

utilization programs, and has partially supported states' ability to maintain and offer utilization services. Initiation and support for a new National Wood Products Utilization Strategy is needed to replace a faltering EAP and maintain support for an industry that provides the economic backbone of many rural communities and landowners across the nation.

For example, in the New York City Watershed region of upstate New York, more than \$2.5 million in federal dollars have been invested in the wood-products industry since 2000. That funding ? matched and leveraged dollar for dollar on the local level ? has been used to re-tool major wood-products companies, develop marketing schematics (including website development) for over 25 wood-based businesses, and provide technical assistance and workshops to dozens of small wood business owners all while helping to protect the drinking water supply for more than 10 million New York City metropolitan area consumers. Over the past several years, the EAP has been eliminated from the federal budget. With increasing overseas competition threatening the wood-based economies across the northeast and southern United States, continued investment in natural resource-based companies in rural communities is essential.

Question6: Forest Products Utilization Research and Assistance

Continued support for USFS Forest Products Laboratory (FPL) and its outreach arm, the Technology Marketing Unit (TMU), is important to develop new wood products utilization research and disseminate both existing and new research. Both programs have served large, small, and micro-industry for many years. They have been the basis and face of a National recognition towards this important, rural-based area of industry. Support in the past has recognized the essential contribution of forest utilization towards sound forestry and other forest-based benefits.

In many cases state forest utilization specialists take the lead on technology transfer. State Specialists rely heavily on production of technical information and assistance from both the FPL and TMU.